

but must end by noting that the well-known British Grey and Blue-headed Wagtails and the Gargauey were met with by the Expedition.

It is unnecessary to give the names of the party in our own journal, and we all know how excellent their work has been ; but we cannot refrain from deploring the sad death by accident of Mr. Stalker, whose place was so well filled by Mr. Claude Grant.

XXXVI.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

We have received the following letters addressed “to the Editors” :—

SIRS,—Would you kindly call attention in your next issue of ‘The Ibis’ to a mistake which occurs on page 508 of the last number (July 1912). At the top of that page “*Correba luteola major*” should be “*Correba luteola*” only, and the words “(Pl. VIII. fig. 2)” which follow “*Correba luteola major*” should be transferred from the top of the page to after “*C. luteola major*,” about halfway down p. 508.

I am, Sirs,

Yours &c.,

The Hatch, Windsor,  
July 11th, 1912.

PERCY R. LOWE.

SIRS,—As the references in Mr. R. Gurney’s letter (*antea*, p. 352) apply to my papers on Corsican ornithology, I trust that I may be permitted to say a few words in reply.

In the first place the English name of each species is given in the paper in question as well as the scientific name, and where the scientific name is liable to be misunderstood, well-known synonyms have been added in brackets. There is therefore no cause for confusion in the mind of any English reader as to what bird is referred to.

As I stated on p. 322 I have followed Dr. Hartert’s

nomenclature throughout, as no other writer has studied the races of Palearctic birds so thoroughly, or taken the trouble to ascertain their correct nomenclature in accordance with the Rules of the International Commission on Zoological nomenclature. It might almost be thought unnecessary in a scientific journal to point out the difficulties caused by non-adherence to rules, when those who, in Mr. Gurney's own words, "have neither time nor inclination to qualify as specialists," yet reserve the right to override law to suit their own convenience. If such a course is generally adopted, it must lead to anarchy.

Space forbids my discussing every detail, but I will take the first instance which Mr. Gurney quotes. He asks what could justify the change of our familiar name *Anas boscas* to *A. platyrhyncha*. In the first place an unjustifiable change has already been made for Linnaeus did not write "*boscas*" at all, but *boschas*. Moreover, when he described the male of the Wild Duck under this name, he had already unwittingly described the female as *A. platyrhynchos*. This name has already been universally adopted in America, so that if we were willing to break through the law of priority in this case, we should be faced with the absurdity of having a different scientific name for the same bird on each side of the Atlantic!

Needless to say such a course tends to defeat the whole purpose of scientific nomenclature, which must be treated on the broadest lines and not become the sport of personal or local prejudices.

I am, Sirs,

Yours &c.,

Clifton Vicarage,  
Ashburne,  
Derbyshire.

F. C. R. JOURDAIN.

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SIRS,—In the last number of 'The Ibis,' p. 559, appears a letter from Mr. H. L. White, wherein he notes that the reference of the white eggs to *Rallina tricolor* seems to have been doubted by me. I think he has confused the editorial

comment on my work with my own opinion. I did *not* doubt Barnard's statement, as will be seen by reference to my work (vol. i. p. 235).

Campbell, in his 'Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds,' which is the standard work on Australian oological matters, described the eggs as spotted. He rejected Cockerell's account, and also doubted the white eggs ('Emu,' vol. x. p. 244, 1910) sent to him by Barnard.

Inasmuch as Cockerell, Broadbent, and Barnard have all stated that *Rallina tricolor* lays white eggs, the matter must be considered settled. I have now received a letter from Dr. W. Macgillivray stating that his collector, McLennan, has confirmed the observations of Barnard and also proved that the spotted eggs belong to *Amaurornis moluccana ruficrissa*.

I should conclude that there can be no doubt now that the eggs of *Tomirdus tricolor robinsoni* (= *Rallina tricolor* of Australian ornithologists) are white, while the spotted eggs belong to the other Rail above mentioned.

I am, Sirs,

Yours &c.,

GREGORY M. MATHEWS.

Langley Mount, Watford,  
Aug. 25, 1912.

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*New Book on the Phasianide.*—A Monograph of the Pheasants, on which Mr. C. William Beebe, of New York, has been at work during the past two years, is now well under way. The work is being financed by Col. Anthony R. Kuser, and will be published, under the auspices of the New York Zoological Society, by Messrs. Witherby & Co. The coloured illustrations are being prepared by Thorburn, Lodge, Jones, and Grönwald in this country, and by Knight and Fuertes in America. These will shew the adult birds, with backgrounds derived from sketches and photographs of their actual haunts. The eggs, nestling, juvenile and first year's plumage will also be figured. In addition there will be upwards of one hundred photogravure plates of the nests, eggs, and haunts of the various species.

The two years of field-work in the Far East which Mr. and Mrs. Beebe accomplished in 1910 and 1911 have been supplemented this summer by several months' study of the collections in London, Tring, Paris, and Berlin.

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*The Shoe-bill in the Regent's Park.*—The following particulars concerning the fine Shoe-bill (*Baleniceps rex*) lately received by the Zoological Society of London may be of interest.

On April 12th, 1912, the Sudan Govt. Steamer 'Amka' (from Meshra to Khartoum) reached the first wood-station north of Meshra. On the river between Lake Ambadi and Meshra, Capts. Larken and Lewis, Inspectors of the Bahr el Ghazal Province of the Sudan, and I (Capt. Eric Stephenson, D.S.O., 9th Sudanese) were on board. Before we reached the wood station, the British Engineer in charge of the 'Amka' told us that he had been directed by Mr. A. L. Butler, Director of Game Preservation in the Sudan, to endeavour to capture some Shoe-bills (*Baleniceps rex*). There were many of these birds seen about, but we failed to find any nests, although natives were landed several times at likely spots. Just before reaching the wood-station the engineer told us that an Arab trader had offered him one of these birds, on his way up the river, for £E50. Knowing that traffic in the birds was illegal, we discussed the matter and, on arrival at the station, sent for the "trader" and ordered him to produce the bird, which he did. Capt. Lewis, who was Ruler of the district, being with us, heard the case, and confiscated the bird (as it was illegal to possess it). The native's story was that the trader had purchased this bird some months before from some local natives. On the bird's arrival at Khartoum, the Sirdar determined to send it home, as a present to the Zoological Society of London, at whose Gardens it was delivered safely in July last.

As is well-known the existence of this remarkable bird was first discovered by Mansfield Parkyns of Nottingham.

It was described by John Gould in 1851 (see P.Z.S. 1851, p. 1, pl. xxxv.) and was excellently figured by Wolf (*Zool. Sketches*, 1864). The name was invented for Gould by the writer of

Text-fig. 14



Shoebill in the Giza Zoological Gardens.

(From a photograph taken by Mrs. Stanley Flower.)

this note, and, strange to say, it is the only name yet given to this remarkable form. In 1860 Mr. Petherick (British Consul at Khartoum) brought home two living specimens (see P. Z. S. 1860, pp. 184 & 196), which were purchased by the Zoological Society of London and lived some months in the Regent's Park.

There are now three living Shoe-bills in the Zoological Gardens at Giza and one in the Government House Garden at Khartoum.

There are eggs of *Balæniceps* in the British Museum, obtained by Petherick. They are described as of a blunt oval shape, and white in colour, and without any gloss ( $3\cdot6 \times 2\cdot3$  inches).—P. L. S.

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*Courtship of the Redshank.*—In a recently issued number of the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London' (1912, part iii. p. 647) will be found an article that will much interest many of our readers. It gives a full account of the courtship of the Redshank (*Totanus calidris*), as observed by the writer (Mr. Julian S. Huxley, Lecturer at Balliol College, Oxford) last spring in a secluded corner of North Wales, of which the exact position is prudently withheld, though we are told that it is in the "northern half of the Bay of Cardigan." The Redshank is supposed to be a well-known species, but when Mr. Huxley returned to "civilization and libraries" he found, to his great surprise, that the observations already recorded on this subject were "either fragmentary or inaccurate." The only writer on it that could be found was our friend Mr. F. C. Selous, who has contributed "a fairly complete account of it" to the 'Zoologist' of 1906. But Mr. Huxley intends to continue his own observations on this attractive subject "when opportunity offers."

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*New List of British Birds.*—A new list of British Birds with the names "revised strictly in accordance with the International Rules of Zoological Nomenclature" has been drawn up by four well-known Ornithologists (Dr. Hartert and Messrs. Jourdain, N. C. Ticehurst and Witherby) and has been published (as will be seen in our advertisements) by Messrs. Witherby and Co. It is proposed to offer some remarks on this work in the next number of 'The Ibis.'